



## Chapter 5. Patient Centeredness

### Importance and Measures

As noted in the 2003 NHQR, “patient centeredness” is defined as: “[H]ealth care that establishes a partnership among practitioners, patients, and their families (when appropriate) to ensure that decisions respect patients’ wants, needs, and preferences and that patients have the education and support they need to make decisions and participate in their own care.”<sup>1</sup> Patient centeredness “encompasses qualities of compassion, empathy, and responsiveness to the need, values, and expressed preferences of the individual patient.”<sup>2</sup>

### Morbidity and Mortality

- Patient centered approaches to care that rely on building a doctor-patient relationship, improving communication techniques, and fostering a positive atmosphere have been shown to improve the health status of patients.<sup>3, 4</sup>
- A patient centered approach has been shown to lessen the symptom burden on patients.<sup>5</sup>
- Patient centered care encourages patients to comply with and adhere to treatment regimens.<sup>6, 7</sup>
- Patient centered care reduces the chance of misdiagnosis due to poor communication.<sup>8</sup>

### Cost

- Patient centeredness has been shown to reduce underuse and overuse of medical services.<sup>9</sup>
- Patient centeredness can reduce the strain on system resources or save money by reducing the number of diagnostic tests and referrals.<sup>4, 5</sup>
- Although some studies have shown that being patient centered reduces costs and use of health service resources,<sup>5, 10</sup> others have shown that patient centeredness increases costs to providers, especially in the short run.<sup>11</sup>
- The practice of patient centered care may reduce the risk factors that often lead to malpractice suits;<sup>12, 13</sup> however, others dispute the evidence of this.<sup>14</sup>

### Measures

The NHQR tracks four measures of the patient experience of care. This section highlights two of these measures:

- Patients who report that their doctor explains things clearly
- Patients who report that their doctor shows respect for what they have to say

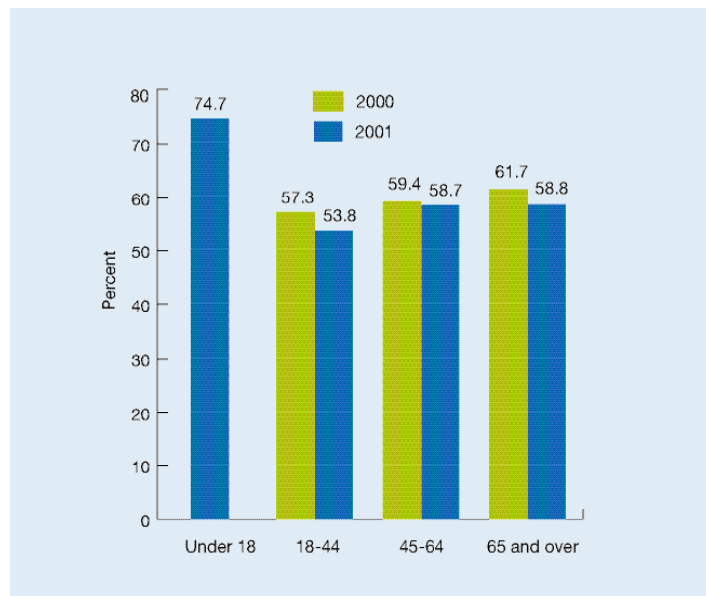


## Findings

### Patients Who Report That Their Doctor Explains Things Clearly

It is important for providers to listen to patients since they must rely on them for information about symptoms and other information bearing on medical conditions and treatments. It is also important for the provider to listen because patients and physicians often have different views of symptoms and treatment effectiveness.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 5.1. Percent of persons having a health care provider that always explains things clearly, by age group, 2000-2001**



**Source:** Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2000 and 2001.

**Note:** Due to a methodological change between 2000 and 2001 in the way children's data were collected, trend data for the under 18 age group are unavailable for 2000.

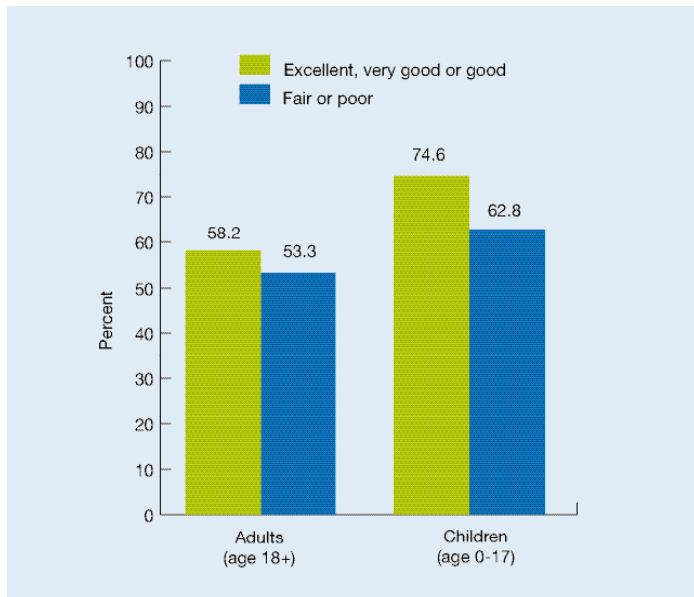
- Overall the percentage of adults having a doctor who always explained things clearly remained stable from 2000 to 2001 (Figure 5.1).
- Percentages reported for children are higher than those reported for adults, irrespective of insurance type.
- In general, percentages for older adults on Medicare (both managed care and fee-for-service) on this measure tend to be higher than those for adults with commercial insurance. This is especially true for Medicare fee-for-service where States who reported scores ranged from a low of 60.8% to a high of 76.3% (see Tables Appendix, Tables 4.4.c-h).
- Similarly, adults on Medicaid have higher percentages than do adults with commercial insurance, with the majority of States reporting scores above the national average (see Tables Appendix, Tables 4.4b-h).



## Patients Who Report That Their Doctor Shows Respect for What They Have To Say

Respect for patient's values, preferences, and expressed needs is one of several important dimensions of patient centered care.<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 5.2. Percent of persons having a health care provider that always shows respect, by perceived health status, 2001**



**Source:** Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2001.

- Adult scores for providers showing respect remained stable from 2000 to 2001 (Figure 5.2).
- Children in fair or poor health were significantly less likely than other children to have a provider that always showed them respect.
- Percentages for older adults on Medicare (both managed care and fee-for-service) tend to be higher than those for adults with commercial insurance. For example, States that reported Medicare fee-for-service scores ranged from a low of 64.1% to a high of 77.0% (see Tables Appendix, Tables 4.5c-h).
- Similarly, adults on Medicaid have higher percentages than do adults with commercial insurance, with the majority of States reporting scores above the national average (see Tables Appendix, Tables 4.5c-h).



## List of Measures: Patient Centeredness

Measure	Year	National estimate	National table number	State table number
<b>Patient experience of care:</b>				
Among adults age 18 and over who reported going to a doctor's office or clinic in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers listened carefully to them	2001	55.0	4.1a 4.1b	4.1c 4.1d 4.1e 4.1f 4.1g 4.1h
Among children under age 18 who had a doctor's office or clinic visit reported in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers listened carefully to their parents	2001	71.9	4.2a	4.2b 4.2c
Among adults age 18 and over who reported going to a doctor's office or clinic in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers explained things clearly	2001	56.4	4.3a 4.3b	4.3c 4.3d 4.3e 4.3f 4.3g 4.3h
Among children under age 18 who had a doctor's office or clinic visit in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers explained things clearly	2001	74.7	4.4a	4.4b 4.4c
Among adults age 18 and over who reported going to a doctor's office or clinic in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers showed respect for what they had to say	2001	57.4	4.5a 4.5b	4.5c 4.5d 4.5e 4.5f 4.5g 4.5h
Among children under age 18 who had a doctor's office or clinic visit in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers showed respect for what their parents had to say	2001	74.3	4.6a	4.6b 4.6c
Among adults age 18 and over who reported going to a doctor's office or clinic in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers spent enough time with them	2001	44.0	4.7a 4.7b	4.7c 4.7d 4.7e 4.7f 4.7g 4.7h
Among children under age 18 who had a doctor's office or clinic visit in the last 12 months, percent distribution of how often their health providers spent enough time with them and their parents	2001	67.7	4.8a	4.8b 4.8c

**Note:** See Tables Appendix for national and State tables listed above.



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